



Successful Start

Partner Pages



Winter 2007

Successful Start & EOHHS Launch Inter-Agency Early Childhood Systems Project

Successful Start and the Executive Office of Health & Human Services recently announced a new effort to assess the effectiveness of the early childhood system and develop opportunities for improving service quality, capacity, and coordination. Jane Hayward, Secretary of the Executive Office of Health & Human Services, presented the Inter-agency Early Childhood Systems Project at the Successful Start Partnership Retreat held in December.

In late 2005, the Rhode Island Children's Cabinet adopted three new areas of focus: information technology across departments, youth development and success, and building on Successful Start to promote early childhood development. With this charge, Successful Start and EOHHS formed the Inter-agency Early Childhood Systems Project. The goal of the project is to implement key, cross-departmental systems issues outlined in the [Successful Start Early Childhood Systems Plan](#).

The project is now working to assess the effectiveness and efficiency of the current service delivery system. This involves identifying gaps and redundancies, examining program quality, and exploring opportunities to enhance and expand prevention activities. Part of this work involves an analysis of state-funded or managed programs serving young children and families. This analysis, which is looking at program capacity, populations served, and funding sources and amounts, will provide an overall picture of the early childhood service system to support data-driven decision-making.

Over the past several months, Successful Start staff and members of the Steering Committee have been meeting with Secretary Hayward and EOHHS staff to develop a workplan and timeline for the project. Four priority action areas have been identified. Over the next several months, recommendations and strategies for improving service delivery within and across these four areas will be developed. A report will be presented to the Children's Cabinet in the Fall.

For more information on the Inter-agency Early Childhood Systems Project, download the project brief from the [Successful Start website](#) or contact [Tammy Camillo](#) at (401) 222-4354.

Inter-Agency Early Childhood Systems Project

Priority Action Areas

- * Comprehensive, Intensive Services for At-Risk Families
- * Developmental & Preventive Health Services
- * Early Childhood Behavioral Health
- * Early Care & Education Quality

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Successful Start

Mission Statement

Successful Start partners will use Rhode Island's Early Childhood Systems Plan to ensure that all young children reach their full potential through a system of services that promotes healthy social-emotional development, quality early care and education, coordinated medical homes, and effective parent education and family support services.

Providence Partnership for Young Children Plans Awareness Campaign

The Federal Hill House Association convened the first meeting of the Providence Partnership for Young Children on February 28th. The Partnership's purpose is to promote healthy early childhood development and universal preventive family support in Providence through community partnerships and public awareness.

Over the past several months, the Partnership has been gathering input on the needs of young children in Providence and the significance of the first three years of a child's development. Four major issues have emerged. They are: 1) the need for preventive parent education (regarding school readiness and health); 2) the importance of informal support networks for families; 3) the need for more access to early care and education programs; and 4) the lack of safe physical spaces for children to grow and play.

The Partnership is planning a public awareness campaign in conjunction with Child Abuse Prevention Month activities in April. The theme of the campaign is "Young Children Learn Through Play". The group is also planning a citywide Play-A-Thon for Monday, April 23rd. The Play-A-Thon kick-off will take place at the Providence Children's Museum. For more information or to become involved in the Partnership, contact [Angela Muccio](#) at (401) 421-4722, ext. 24.

"Although education and the acquisition of skills is a lifelong process, starting early in life is crucial. Recent research...has documented the high returns that early childhood programs can pay in terms of subsequent educational attainment and in lower rates of social problems... The most successful early childhood programs appear to be those that cultivate both cognitive and noncognitive skills and that engage families in stimulating learning at home."

--Ben Bernanke

Federal Reserve Board Chairman, before the Omaha Chamber of Commerce, February 2007

DCYF, Community Partners Promote Access to Early Intervention Services for Children Age Birth to Three

A recent federal mandate requires that children under the age of three, who are victims of an indicated case of abuse and/or neglect, are screened for eligibility for Early Intervention services and that appropriate referrals to Early Intervention are made.

This mandate falls under two federal statutes - the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Over the past year and a half, the RI Department of Children, Youth and Families has been working in collaboration with the RI Department of Human Services, RI Department of Health, and community partners and family members through the Early Intervention Inter-Agency Coordinating Council to develop and implement a regularized referral process to Early Intervention services.

This work has involved the development of policy for DCYF, implementing an inter-agency agreement between DHS and DCYF, and the development of data systems that capture and track information to ensure continuous quality improvement in identifying appropriate referrals and service needs for children and families. Additionally, DCYF is working with Early Intervention programs to streamline referrals (for children involved with DCYF) that are made by third parties, including foster parents and physicians.

Based on data collected over a seven-month period in 2006, there were a total of 374 children under age three involved with DCYF. Of the total, 219 were referred (59%) to Early Intervention programs. For more information on CAPTA implementation, contact [Lee Baker](#) at (401) 528-3837.

Number of Children Screened in RI Continues to Grow



Watch Me Grow RI, an initiative of Successful Start and the RI Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics, is continuing to expand its reach in the Washington County area. Through the project, children under five years receive developmental and behavioral screening in child care centers and primary care offices.

Two pediatric primary care offices, South County Pediatrics and Wakefield Pediatrics, are participating in the project. Together, these offices are home to eight pediatricians, one physician assistant, one nurse practitioner, and one parent consultant. Nine child care centers are also part of the pilot.

A Washington County Community Networking Meeting was held in November and was attended by over 40 early childhood service providers (including pediatricians, mental health providers, Early Intervention programs, child care providers, and Child Outreach). Participants were provided with an introduction to Watch Me Grow RI and had the opportunity to meet and network.

Over the next year, Watch Me Grow RI will recruit additional primary care offices and child care providers in Washington County. For more information, contact [Tammy Camillo](#) at (401) 222-4354.

Positive Educational Partnership Finalizing Plan for Early Care Settings

Preparations are underway to expand the Positive Educational Partnership (PEP) project to early care and education settings. PEP is a six-year grant awarded to the RI Department of Children, Youth and Families in 2005. Services to early care and education are slated to begin in October.

Over the past several months, the project has convened an Early Childhood Subcommittee charged with developing an implementation plan for work with early care and education providers and families of young children with behavioral health concerns. The subcommittee is currently assessing options for offering the Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (or a similar model) to early care and education sites statewide.

National experts on early childhood behavioral health provided their expertise and advice to subcommittee members at a December retreat. Presenters included Roxane Kaufmann and Neal Horen from Georgetown University, Charlie Biss from the Vermont Department of Health, and Howard Muscott of the New Hampshire Center for Effective Behavioral Interventions and Supports.

For more information on the Positive Educational Partnership project, contact [Ginny Stack](#), PEP Project Director, at (401) 528-3780.

Successful Start Project Evaluation

There have been positive changes in Rhode Island's early childhood system over the past year.

- **44% Strongly Agree**
- **56% Somewhat Agree**

Successful Start is making progress towards the goals of the Early Childhood Systems Plan.

- **75% Strongly Agree**
- **25% Somewhat Agree**

* Evaluation disseminated at the Successful Start Retreat, December 4, 2006; 32 responses received.

News in Brief...

Kid's Link RI is the state's first centralized emergency hotline for children in emotional crisis and suffering from behavioral problems or mental health issues. The hotline (1-866-429-3979) is open 24 hours a day, seven days a week. It connects parents and caregivers to all children's services and helps parents determine the best place to go for treatment. See the Kid's Link RI website for more information.

Ask Rhody is a new online search engine that links Rhode Islanders to information on local social service agencies and the services they provide. Search for services by name, keyword, or location. Check out Ask Rhody at www.dhs.ri.gov/askrhody.

The RI Department of Human Services is convening a workgroup to review, and recommend revisions to the state's **EPSDT Periodicity Schedule** (EPDST = Early Periodic Screening, Diagnosis, and Treatment). This schedule establishes the content and frequency of medical and dental services for children covered by Medical Assistance programs. For more information, contact [Sharon M. Kernan, RN, MPH](#) at (401) 462-3392.

Home Connections is a new program for families of young children with Autism Spectrum Disorder. The program helps families learn the necessary building blocks of social development, and how to help their child acquire these stepping stones to connection through enjoyable interactions, shared activities, and daily life routines that facilitate social growth.. Visit the [Home Connections website](#) or call (401) 722-5573.

Upcoming Events...

The Department of Children, Youth and Families is preparing request for proposals to develop an Integrated Family and Community System of Care. Four meetings have been scheduled to solicit community input.

- March 5, 10:00am – 12:00pm, Bristol Elder Care, Bristol
- March 7, 10:00am – 12:00pm, Casey Family Services, Providence
- March 7, 2:30pm – 4:30pm, CCRI Knight Campus, Rm 4080, Warwick
- March 13, 10:00am – 12:00pm, CCRI Flanagan Campus, Rm 2076, Lincoln

RSVP to [Debra DiScuillo](#) by email or (401) 528-3797. More information on the proposed system is available on the main page of the [DCYF website](#).

Partnerships: Improving Outcomes for Children and Youth with Special Health Care Needs and Their Families. March 28, 2007. CEUs available. Contact [Barbara Torres](#) at (401) 727-4144.

A Look in the Mirror: What We Bring to Our Relationships with the Families We Serve. Boston Institute for the Development of Infants and Parents. April 14, 2007. Weston, MA. (617) 484-6603 or www.bidip.org.

Successful Start

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